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## New slots for boaters

### Gateway Harbor marina construction expected to start in March

12/23/2009 10:00 PM

By IAN FULLERTON

Contributing Reporter

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A new marina will be built at Gateway Harbor, between Navy Pier and the Chicago River's outlet to Lake Michigan.

The Chicago Park District will oversee the construction of a 2,610-foot-long pier atop an existing pier, providing 240 new slips for permanent and transient boaters and 15,500 square feet of restaurant and retail space.

The Plan Commission unanimously approved the park district's pitch last week.

Park district spokeswoman Marta Juaniza said the redevelopment addresses a mounting need in the downtown lakefront area.

"The demand for slips has been growing over the years," she said.

Juaniza said the overall costs for the Gateway Harbor project were estimated at more than \$40 million, a tab the agency plans to pick up by bonding against future boat slip revenues, with the help of a \$3.2 million federal grant.

Photovoltaic solar panels will line 25 percent of the pier's roof area and the remaining space will be coated with high albedo material to reduce air-conditioning energy use. The plan calls for 84 trees to be planted on the pier and near its entrance.

Docking slips for the structure will vary to cater to different-sized vessels. While most of the slips will range from 40 to 90 feet in length, two of the pier branches will be fit to accommodate "super yachts" of up to 200 feet, with an additional three slips on Navy Pier designed for larger boats.

The development also imagines a curving breakwater for wave protection and additional pedestrian space, located mid-point on the pier.

The new pier will replace Dime Pier. Dating back to the 1930s, Dime was once a popular off-shore fishing destination. Located about 300 feet from the shore, the pier got its name from the fee anglers were charged to cross over to the structure by boat.

Now dilapidated and unsafe for use, the city traded the property to the park district in 2007 in exchange for property near DuSable Harbor.

The Gateway Harbor project isn't the only plan in the works for the lakefront. Also on the table is a proposed 850-slip marina at the 31st Street Beach, which would include a new restaurant, lakefront community center and 300-car parking facility.

Plans for the harbor improvements are tagged with the promise of economic growth from tourists and boaters drawn to the shoreline.

According to the Chicago Lakefront Harbor Framework Plan, a 20-year outline of the city's designs for the shoreline, "putting the harbors into their fiscal context helps to frame discussions of potential future system expansion ... As the analysis shows, the full economic impact of the harbor system extends far beyond the boating community."



A rendering of the new marina.  
Chicago Park District

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Released in October 2007, the plan maps out improvements to facilities, revetment repairs and the addition of boat slips for nearly every harbor along the lake.

At last week's Plan Commission meeting, Ald. Brendan Reilly (42nd) welcomed the Gateway Harbor project.

"This is an exciting reuse of existing infrastructure that I think will provide an excellent boost to the city's tourism economy," he said.

Reilly commended the project's design and scale, and praised the park district for upholding Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards in planning for the pier.

"This would be another jewel in the city's crown that attracts people to come and visit Chicago," he said.

Former president of the Streeterville Organization of Active Residents Gail Spreen also gave her blessing to the new pier.

"The need for transient slips in Chicago has existed for a long time," she said. "[This] will be a service to the boaters of Lake Michigan."

Spreen said that the organization's only concerns have been with the attention to pedestrian traffic and parking to accommodate the new facilities.

Resident George Blakemore gave his support for the project, but voiced fears that contracting for the project would overlook minority- and women-owned businesses.

"I've addressed this body several times about making sure that minorities are part of these construction plans here," he said.

Commission Chair Linda Searl answered that job overview was not the under the purview of the body.

Construction for the new pier at Gateway Harbor is slated to begin in March 2010, with a completion date set at May 1, 2011.

The project is expected to generate a total of 64 jobs, with \$2.3 million in labor income and \$3.6 million in value coming out of the new pier, according to an economic impact analysis for the harbor.

Vendors for the restaurant and retail spaces have not been identified yet.

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**By Hankpi from Wicker Park**

Posted: 01/14/2010 9:55 AM

Your reference to the dime pier was actually the nickel pier and the dime pier was Government pier witch is straight east from the nickel pier.

**By sailor from Wrigleyville**

Posted: 12/30/2009 12:10 PM

I agree with Marinauser, this is a disaster for Monroe Harbor boaters. I'd say 50% of my evening sailing trips involved a quick cruise down past Navy Pier. When the lake was too rough, you could always entertain yourself by cruising navy pier. Now it is going to be a dangerous congested mess.

**By Marinauser from south loop**

Posted: 12/30/2009 10:43 AM

Seems to be a horrible design for anyone familiar with boating around Navy Pier in the summer. Many of the boaters from other marinas like to cruise the pier and it can get pretty congested with all of the tour boat traffic. This design seems to leave absolutely no room to maneuver and you are putting even more boats in a congested area. Also, the design seems to eliminate an area where boats wait for the locks and where boats leave the area without going out the way they came in.

**By gary from Suburbs**

Posted: 12/29/2009 7:42 AM

I think this is a wonderfull ides. Although, unless they build in enough room for close affordable parking and storage for the boaters and their guest. Getting to and from the harbor will just be a pain in the ass.

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